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BLINKEN MEETS PALESTINE PRESIDENT ABBAS IN SURPRISE WEST BANK TRIP

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Sunday met Palestinian prez Mahmoud Abbas to sketch out a post-conflict scenario for the Gaza Strip

RULES OUT CEASEFIRE, SAYS IT WILL HELP HAMAS

While Abbas urged him to persuade Israel for an immediate cease-fire, Blinken ruled out such a move saying it would only help Hamas to regroup and unleash more violence. Blinken said that instead of a ceasefire, the US will push for localised pauses in fighting to allow in humanitarian aid and for people to leave the densely populated Gaza Strip, where the war is raging | PTI

BIBI SUSPENDS MINISTER FOR 'NUKE' REMARK

- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suspended Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu from government meetings indefinitely for suggesting that dropping an atomic bomb on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip was "an option" on the table
- Eliyahu backtracked from his statement, calling it a "metaphorical"

40

REPORTEDLY KILLED AFTER A GAZA REFUGEE CAMP WAS HIT ON SUNDAY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Virat Kohli celebrates his hundred against South Africa at Eden Gardens on Sunday. With 14 points India will finish on top of the points table | SHIBA PRASAD SAHU

Kohli equals Tendulkar with 49th ODI hundred

FIROZ MIRZA @ Kolkata

THE iconic Eden Gardens is not just used to witnessing history but is itself a part of cricketing folklore. Any landmark achieved in this cathedral of cricket is special. When Virat Kohli called his feat the stuff of dreams, it was no overstatement.

The noise in the stadium was deafening when he equalled his idol Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 hundreds in his inimitable style against South Africa on Sunday. What made the landmark knock more special was that it came on his birthday on the same ground where he scored his first ODI hundred. Kohli helped India reach a total of 326 as the hosts handed South Africa a resounding 243-run defeat. He only took 277 innings, as compared to Sachin's 451, to get to hundred No 49. With this, he has etched his name in the echelons of greatness.

The hundred seemed inevitable too. It was just a matter of time after a string of scores that reflected his pristine form. The prolific batter had missed chances to score a ton thrice in the tournament when he got out for 85, 95 and 88 runs against Australia, England and Sri Lanka, respectively. Such has been his dominance in the one-day format over the years, especially while chasing, that it has earned him the moniker Chase King.

The 121-ball 101 not out might have been his slowest ODI ton but it came at the right time on a surface, which was on the slower side, making batting tricky. "When you lose two wickets and don't have Hardik (Pandya), you need to bat deep and get to a stage where the opposition feels like we have to restrict them. Every opportunity to play for India is a big one, to be able to ton up on my birthday is the stuff of dreams. Grateful to God that I've been blessed with such moments," Kohli summed up his emotions during the break. P13

After EC notice, Central govt notifies 'prabharis'

Officials to be sent to states where MCC will not come into force this yr

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

DAYS after a political row erupted over a 'rath prabhari' circular, the Centre has issued a notification nominating civil servants in various ministries as 'prabharis' (special officers) in states barring the ones that are going to polls this month. The officers are deployed to oversee a proposed country-wide mega rally from November 20 to highlight the Narendra Modi government's achievements in the past nine years. The move comes a week after the Election Commission directed the Centre not to appoint bureaucrats as 'rath prabharis' in poll-bound states—Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Mizoram and Chhattisgarh.

Interestingly, the government had said the senior officers would be called nodal officers rather than 'rath prabharis" after the EC ban. However, the latest order calls them Prabhari Officers — Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, with only Rath being removed.

The EC took the step after receiving complaints about the government's plan to depute senior bureaucrats for its proposed Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra from November 20, citing the Model Code of Conduct in place till December 5.

In a notification on November 3, the Centre nominated officers in the rank of joint secretaries/director/deputy secretary level in various ministries as Prabhari Officers in connection with the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, coordinated by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

SPECIAL OFFICERS

- At least 43 officers in various ranks have been deputed from each ministry to coordinate the preparations, planning, and execution of the programme
- The officers have been given charge of at least two districts in each state
- The states where the officials have been deputed include Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Meghalaya, West Bengal and Karnataka

At the centre of the controversy is a circular issued by the government on October 17, asking all Union ministries to name senior officials to deploy them as "district rath prabharis" for the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra between November 20, 2023, and January 25, 2024, to showcase/celebrate the achievements of the last nine years", of the Modi government.

However, the EC on October 26 issued a notice saying that the campaign should not be carried out in the constituencies where the Model Code of Conduct is in force till December 5. "It has been brought to the notice of the Commission that a letter has been circulated to the Ministries for the nomination of senior officers as "District Rath Praharis" as special officers for the proposed 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' starting from 20th November 2023," it said.

Meanwhile, the Opposition had alleged that the government is trying to politicise the bureaucracy, with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge writing a letter to the Prime Minister.

EXPRESS READ

Leaves for defence women on par with officers

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal to grant maternity, child care and child adoption leave to women soldiers, sailors and air warriors on par with their officer counterparts. The defence ministry on Sunday said the decision is in line with Singh's vision of "inclusive participation" | P10

Home-alone senior officer in mines dept murdered in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A 43-year-old senior geologist in the Department of Mines and Geology was found murdered with her throat slit at her residence in Doddakallasandra in Subramanyapura police station limits on Sunday morning. The motive for the murder is yet to be ascertained and the police have formed three special teams to crack the case.

The deceased, **Prathima KS**, hailed from Thirthahalli in Shivamogga. She joined the Mines and Geology department about 15 years ago and was currently working in the department's Bengaluru Urban unit located at Visvesvaraya Towers near Vidhana Soudha. She was living alone on the first floor of an independent house next to Gokulam apartment complex in Doddakallasandra for the last 10 years, while her husband and son live in Thirthahalli.

The police said that Prathima was at her office till 6.30 pm on Saturday after which she was dropped home in her official vehicle. The incident came to light on Sunday at around 7.45 am when her brother Prateesh, who had tried to contact her over the phone since Saturday night, came to check on her as she was not answering his calls. She was found lying in a pool of blood in the house and the police were alerted.

DCP (South) Rahul Kumar Shahapurwad said the assailants have murdered the woman by strangulating and slitting her throat. "We have formed three special teams to crack the case and are investigating the murder from all angles. The motive behind the murder is yet to be established," he said. The police, at this stage, ruled out the possibility of murder for gain as the killers have not searched for valuables in her house. CONTINUED ON: P7

Boxes in rly stn trigger panic in Shivamogga

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

TWO suspicious boxes that were found at the parking lot of Shivamogga railway station triggered panic among the public on Sunday.

The police cordoned off the area and called in the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad from Bengaluru. But the search operation was suspended due to heavy rain.

Police sources said the search will commence again once the rain subsides.

The two boxes were spotted during the afternoon. Both the district police bomb squad and a dog squad unit were involved in the preliminary search.

CONTINUED ON: P7

Parl panel may adopt 3 draft bills to replace criminal laws today

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AS the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs reviewing the three Bills seeking to replace the existing criminal laws set to meet on Monday, it is likely to adopt the draft bill despite objections from members of the opposition parties, according to sources.

Fuelling speculations, home minister Amit Shah asserted last week that the three new bills will be passed by Parliament soon.

Though the panel met last week, it deferred the adoption of the draft report after protests from the Opposition seeking more time and consultations to finalise it. Sources familiar with the developments told this newspaper that they have submitted dissent notes to the committee suggesting changes in the bills.

However, the panel headed by BJP MP Brij Lal may adopt one of the important recommendations made by the panel to criminalise non-consensual sexual activities involving men, women, or transpersons, as well as acts of bestiality under section 377 of the IPC. Another source told this paper that the majority view of the panel cutting across party lines was to retain section 377 to criminalize non-consensual "unnatural offenses".

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, the proposed replacement for the IPC has completely removed IPC Section 377 which was read down by the Supreme Court in 2018, he pointed out. Most of the members were of the view that the absence of this section in the BNS can leave male or female victims of sexual assault without any other legal remedy.

Though the SC in a judgment in 2018 ruled that consensual gay sex is not a crime, certain provisions of the law Section 377 ("unnatural offenses") remained applicable in the IPC.

Centre blocks 22 betting apps, including Mahadev

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

THE government on Sunday ordered blocking of 22 betting apps and websites, including Mahadev Book and Reddyannaprestopro.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, in a press note, said the action follows investigations conducted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against illegal betting app syndicate and subsequent raids on Mahadev in Chhattisgarh, revealing the app's unlawful operations.

"Chhattisgarh Government had all the power to recommend shutting down of website/app under Sec 69A IT Act. However, they did not do so. In fact, the first and only request has been received from ED and it has been acted upon. Nothing prevented Chhattisgarh government from making similar requests," said Rajeev Chandrasekhar, minister of state Electronics & Information Technology.

The ED is investigating the Mahadev Book Online Betting App syndicate and the promoters of this betting syndicate. Earlier, ED said according to fresh evidence following search operation on November 2, it was found regular payments around Rs 508 crore were made to Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Bhagel.

The owners of Mahadev Book are in custody, arrested under the money laundering act.

WILD WANDERER

Another leopard sighted near NICE Road; cage placed

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

BENGALUREANS have reported sighting another leopard just four days after a big cat was shot dead near AECS Layout. This time, the sighting has occurred in Chikkatoguru, around 3-4 km away from AECS layout.

The area where the leopard has been sighted now is near NICE Road and comes under Anekal range, close to the Bannerghatta National Park (BNP). Forest officials said, "There is no CCTV footage. A local resident saw it and alerted us. We are patrolling the area since then. As it rained last night, finding pugmarks is a little difficult. We have, however, kept a cage with a bait."

He explained that the area where the leopard was sighted has around 60 acres of vacant land. If left undisturbed, the leopard will walk into either BNP or Turahalli reserve forest. There are fewer homes at Chikkatoguru than in AECS Layout, he said. CONTINUED ON: P5

NECC DAY
Late Dr. B. V. Rao
(1935-1996)
On his 88th Birth Anniversary,
we salute the Father of Indian Poultry Industry
Padmashree Dr. B. V. Rao, Who rose above and
beyond the call of duty and restructured
the Indian Poultry Industry as a modern,
Scientific Industry driven by technology.
On this occasion, we rededicate ourselves to
his dreams - making India the
No. 1 country in
the World of Poultry...
NECC
NATIONAL EGG CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE
"My Egg, My Price, My Life"